THE BISHOP of *Chester*'s Charge IN HIS VISITATION.

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THE BISHOP OF Chester's Charge IN HIS Primary Visitation AT CHESTER.

May 5. 1691.

Nicholas Stratford

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BISHOP
OF
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IN HIS
Primary Visitation
AT
CHESTER
APRIL 3 1671.

LONDON

THE
Biſhop of *Cheſter*'s Charge, &c.

My Dear Brethren;

SInce nothing can more conduce to the Edification of the Church in Faith and Holineſs, than that its Paſtors be duly qualified for their Work: I think my time cannot be better employed in this my Primary Viſitation, than in putting you in remembrance, what manner of Men the Paſtors of the Church ought to be; and in quickening you and my ſelf, to the faithful Diſcharge of thoſe great Duties which are incumbent upon us.

In Order to both which Purpoſes, you need do no more than ſeriouſly reflect upon thoſe things, which before your admiſſion to this Sacred Office, you ſolemnly before God and his Church, profeſs'd to believe, and promis'd to perform.

The firſt Queſtion propoſed to you, as preparatory to your Ordination to Prieſthood, was, *Do you think in your heart that you be truly called, according to the Will of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Order of this Church of* England, *to the Order and Miniſtry of Prieſthood?* To which you Anſwered, *I think it:* That is, I think it in my heart, I am verily perſwaded, that I am ſo truly called, according to the Will of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Order of this Church of *England*.

Theſe latter Words [*The Order of the Church of* England] are not put to denote another Rule, different from the *Will of Chriſt*; but are rather added, by way of Explication, to ſhew, Who thoſe are that are called according to his Will, *viz.* Thoſe who are ſo qualified as the Church of *England* requires.

The Call here meant, is the inward Call from God; which muſt go before to prepare a Perſon, for the outward Call from the Church, in ſetting him apart to this Office, by *Prayer* and *Impoſition of hands.*

This inward Call conſiſts in the due qualification of the Perſon, for this weighty Work (for God never calls a Man to any Employment, which he does not before in ſome good meaſure fit him for): Theſe Qualifications may be reduced to Three General Heads: That the *Life*, That the *Learning*, That the *Deſign* of the Perſon be ſuch, as are agreeable to the Sacredneſs of the Office. All which are contain'd, in the Caution the Biſhop gives to the Perſon who preſents to him the Perſons to be Ordain'd. *Take heed, that the Perſons whom you preſent to us, be apt and meet for their Learning and godly Converſation, to exerciſe their Miniſtry duly, to the Honour of God, and the edifying of his Church.*

Firſt, That he be for Life, *blameleſs, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate*, as St. *Paul* preſcribes in his Epiſtle to *Titus*: That is, that he be not addicted to any of thoſe Vices, which would be a Diſparagement to his Miniſtry, and hinder the good effect of it; and that he be indued with all thoſe Vertues, which may adorn it. Whoſoever therefore lives in the Practice of any ſuch Vice, as will leſſen his Authority, and expoſe his Miniſtry to Contempt, he is not qualified, according to the Order of the Church of *England*.

Secondly, That he be for *Learning*, ſo well acquainted with the Senſe of the Holy Scriptures, as to be able to inſtruct his Flock, in all that is neceſſary for them both to know and to do, in order to their Eternal Salvation; and to preſs their Duty upon them by ſuch Conſiderations, as may be apt to work upon their Wills, and induce them to the Practice of it. Thus St. *Paul* adviſes *Timothy*, to make choice of ſuch for Paſtors, who ſhall be *able to teach others*; and commands *Titus* to ſee, that thoſe

2 Tim. 2 2.

he

he ordained were ſuch, as were able by ſound Doctrine, *to exhort and convince Gainſayers.* Whoſoever therefore is ſo ignorant, that he is not able to inſtruct his People in every neceſſary Point, both of Faith and Practice; and to enforce their Duty by fit Perſwaſives, he is not called according to the Will of Chriſt. No man doubtleſs can imagine, That it is the Will of Chriſt that the Blind ſhould lead the Blind; that they ſhould be ſet to be Guides to others, who know not the way themſelves. The Tit. 1. 9.

Third, Neceſſary Qualification, is a *due Intention*; *That a Man be inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt, to take upon him this Office and Miniſtry, to ſerve God for the promoting of his Glory, and the edifying of his People*; as it is expreſs'd in the Office for the ordering of Deacons. Not but that a Mans intention may be approved by God, that hath in it a mixture of reſpect to Secular Advantage; but then it muſt be ſo much Inferiour, in ſuch perfect Subordination to the other, as his principal end, that he deſpiſe all Worldly Regards in compariſon with it; and reſolve to perſevere in his Work, though he meet with all the diſcouragements in the world to oppoſe him.

Though, bleſſed be God, there are many of you, *my Brethren*, not only whoſe Life and Learning are ſuch, as your Adverſaries can make no juſt Exception againſt; but who alſo give ſufficient Proof, that your intention was right, by your unwearied diligence, in the whole and every part of your Work; yet I fear there may be ſome, who if tryed by this Rule, will be forced to confeſs, that they are not ſo qualified, as the Laws of Chriſt, and of this Church require. Can it be thought, that they have the Glory of God principally in their eyes, who endeavour to get into this Holy Employment, by ſuch unworthy Means as God abhors, by falſe Titles, and forged Certificates? Can they be thought to aim chiefly at the Salvation of Souls, who leave the Work wholly to others, and take the Wages only to themſelves? Who

for their eaſe and pleaſure abſent themſelves from their Charges, and think that Curate the beſt qualified, who may be hired at the cheapeſt rate?

And here, my Brethren, I ſhall charge your Conſciences with Two Things relating to this Matter.

Firſt, That you never ſend a Perſon to be Ordained, with a Lye in his hand; that is, that you never ſignifie to the Biſhop, that you will take a Perſon for your Curate (in caſe he ſhall think fit to Ordain him) whom you intend never to employ in that Service: For though a Title is indeed no Qualification for the Office, but a cautionary Proviſion, only for the Maintainance of the Perſon; yet to bring a falſe Title, is a plain Argument, that the Man is deſtitute of that Truth and Honeſty, which are neceſſarily requiſite to ſo Sacred an Office as this is.

Secondly, That you never give a Teſtimonial of the good Life and Converſation of any Perſon, whoſe Life and Converſation you do not certainly know to be ſuch. Conſidering, that if the Biſhop gives Orders to any unworthy Man, upon the Credit he gives to your Certificate, you muſt anſwer to God, for all the Scandal that is brought upon the Church thereby, and for the Ruine of all thoſe Souls, which are miſled by his bad Example.

In the next place, theſe Two Queſtions were propoſed to you, before your Admiſſion to the Office of Prieſthood.

I. *Are you perſwaded that the Holy Scriptures contain ſufficiently all Doctrine required of neceſſity for eternal Salvation, through Faith in Chriſt Jeſus?*

II. *Are you determined out of the ſaid Scriptures, to inſtruct the People committed to your Charge, and to teach nothing (as required of neceſſity to eternal Salvation) but that which you ſhall be perſwaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures?*

To the Firſt you Anſwered, *I am ſo perſwaded*: To the

the Second, *I have ſo determin'd by Gods Grace.*

That the Holy Scriptures contain *ſufficiently*, all Doctrine required of neceſſity to eternal Salvation: That is, That they not only contain all ſuch neceſſary Doctrine, but in ſome place or other, ſo *clearly* contain it, as that it may be underſtood by all thoſe, for whoſe Salvation the Scriptures were deſigned, I take it for granted you all firmly believe; It being the main Foundation of the Religion of Proteſtants, in oppoſition to the Church of *Rome*, which by aſſerting the deficiency of the Holy Scriptures, in both theſe reſpects, hath thereby open'd a door to thoſe many Innovations She hath introduc'd into the Chriſtian Doctrine and Worſhip, and may (if opportunity ſhall ſerve) introduce as many more: I ſhall not therefore inſiſt upon this. That, which it may be more needful to ſpeak to, is;

Secondly, What *by God's Grace* you determined to do, viz. *To inſtruct the People committed to your Charge, out of the ſaid Scriptures; and to teach nothing as required of neceſſity to eternal Salvation, but that which you ſhall be perſwaded*, may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures.

One of the prime Qualifications St. *Paul* requires in a Paſtor, is, That he be διδακτικὸς, not only *able*, but *apt and ready to teach*; and elſewhere he deſcribes him, as one that *labours in the Word and Doctrine*; and that *This Labour in the Word and Doctrine*, was Neceſſary, not only in the Apoſtles days, when the Chriſtian Religion was to be planted in the World, but is ſtill ſo, is manifeſt, from the ends, for which he tells us, *Chriſt* appointed Paſtors and Teachers; which were not only the converting of Infidels, the gathering of the Sheep that were ſcatter'd abroad into the Fold, but *the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of the Body of Chriſt.*

2 Tim. 2. 24.

1 Tim. 5. 17.

Ephes. 4. 12.

'Tis indeed ſtrange, That any Man ſhould think this Work unneceſſary, as long as there are Sinners to be converted from the Error of their ways, and Saints to be edified

edified in their Holy Faith; as long as Souls are in so great danger of being eternally lost, through the daily Assaults of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

And it would be yet more strange, if any Men who own themselves *Ministers of the Church of* England, should think they can be excused from it; when in the Exhortation before their receiving of Priests Orders, they were told, *That to teach, and to premonish, to seek and provide for the Lord's Family, was that they were called unto.* When upon the Bishop's demanding, Whether they were determin'd to instruct the People committed to their Charge out of the Scriptures? They Answered, *They had so determin'd by God's Grace.* When in the very Words of Ordination, it was laid upon them, as a Charge, *To be faithful Dispensers of the Word of God.*

Now this Teaching is either *publick* or *private*: Of the private I shall speak, when I come to the next Question save one: That which is *publick*, is to be perform'd these Two ways especially; by *Preaching* and by *Catechising*. And,

First as to Preaching, Consider that solemn and dreadful Charge St. *Paul* lays upon *Timothy*, *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom,* **Preach the Word.** Consider also, That our Church hath enjoyned every allow'd Preacher that is beneficed, *to have a Sermon every Lord's Day in the Year.* And as a farther Enforcement, That His Majesty hath charged all the Bishops, *To see that the Clergy in their respective Dioceses, be duly resident upon their Livings, preaching the Word of God plainly.*

2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.

[Can. 45.

Letter to the Bishop of *London.*

How assiduous many of the Ancients were in this part of their Office, and how necessary they thought it so to be, I need not tell you; but methinks a serious reflection upon it, should make those not only *blush* but *tremble*, who live in the Neglect of it; who are so far from observing

ſerving the Laws of our Church, while they boaſt of more than ordinary Conformity to it, that they have not perhaps more than one Sermon in a Year, for two Benefices.

Now, that we may in this way of Teaching, be ſucceſsful to the Salvation of our Hearers, we are here directed both as to the *Matter* and the *Manner* of it.

Firſt, As to the *Matter* of our Preaching, it muſt be out of the Holy Scriptures: But ſince of the things contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, ſome are *neceſſary*, ſome are *profitable* only; and ſince of theſe things which are only *profitable*, ſome are more, others are leſs profitable; our Pulpit-Diſcourſes ſhould be chiefly confined to thoſe Truths, which are *neceſſary* or *highly profitable*, in order to eternal Salvation; omitting all School-Niceties, and ſubtle Diſputes, which are of no Practical Uſe; and never let any Truth, which is call'd in queſtion by none of your Hearers, be made a Matter of Controverſie in the Pulpit.

Endeavour effectually to convince your Hearers, how by our Apoſtaſie from God, we have made our ſelves obnoxious to His heavy Diſpleaſure; and that there is a neceſſity of a Mediator between *God* and Man. Shew them who this Mediator is, and how he is qualified for this great Work; what the Terms are, upon which God hath graciouſly promiſed to pardon our Sins, and how ready he is, upon theſe Terms, of Faith, Repentance, and ſincere future Obedience, to receive us into his Favour: Preſs thoſe Graces and Duties moſt, which are moſt comprehenſive, as Juſtice and Charity. Teach them *to render to all their dues, as tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom*, &c. Repreſent CHARITY to them, in all thoſe branches of it, in which it is deſcribed by St. *Paul* in 1 *Cor.* 13. Set your ſelves eſpecially againſt thoſe ſins, which are moſt viſible in your Auditors; as St. *Paul*, who reaſon'd

reason'd of Righteousness and Chastity, when he preached
Acts 24. 25. before an unjust and adulterous *Felix*. More particularly, in pursuance of His Majesties Letter, preach frequently against profane Swearing, Perjury, Drunkenness, and Profanation of the Lords Day; and when such a Sermon is to be preached, read to your People such Statute-Law or Laws, as are provided against that Sin, which is the Subject of the Day: Which Statutes, together with his Majesties Letter, I have formerly sent you. And let not only the more gross Sins of the Flesh, but the more subtle Sins of the Spirit, (such as Pride, Envy, Malice, &c.) be exposed to your People in their odious nature, and aggravating Circumstances. Acquaint them not only with those Duties, to which they are all in common obliged, as they are men and Christians; but with those special Duties, which are incumbent upon them in their different Ages, States and Relations. In short, let that be the drift of your preaching, which is the design of the whole Gospel of Christ, *To teach men to deny all Ungod-*
Tit. 2. 11, 12. *liness and Worldly Lusts, and to live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present World.*

Secondly, As to the *Manner* of Preaching, passing over other particulars, I shall mention Three only at present, Two of which are here sufficiently implyed: Preach the Word *sincerely*, *plainly* and *affectionately*.

1. *Sincerely*; Which is implyed in these Words, *That you will teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal Salvation, but that which you shall be perswaded may be proved by the Scriptures.* For Sincerity consists, as in teaching all that the Scripture makes necessary; so in teaching nothing for necessary, that is foreign to the Scripture; as the Church of *Rome* does in her new Creed, imposing many Doctrines as necessary to Salvation, which are not only Strangers to the Scriptures, but plainly contrary to the Doctrines, which are there taught.

2. Plainly,

2. Plainly, and to the capacity of your Hearers; which is implyed in the Word *inſtruct*: For how can a man be inſtructed by a Diſcourſe, which he knows not the meaning of? He defeats the deſign of his Preaching, and betrays his Hypocriſie, who renders that obſcure, which he pretends to reveal. To which I add;

3. Preach *Affectionately*, with that warmth and earneſtneſs of Spirit, which becomes matters of the greateſt moment: It would grieve a Man to hear matters of the greateſt moment, ſo coldly and drowſily delivered, as if the Preacher did not himſelf believe what he ſaid, and were afraid leſt his Hearers ſhould be brought to believe it. O my Brethren, let us but ſeriouſly conſider the ineſtimable worth of ſouls, the unvaluable price that was paid for them, what danger they are in of being eternally loſt, how dreadful our accounts will ſhortly be, if they be loſt through our ſlightneſs and lazineſs: Let us but conſider what Heaven and Hell mean, what it is to be everlaſtingly ſaved or damned, and we ſhall then think our greateſt zeal and fervency, will be little enough, for ſuch a Work as this.

I ſhall ſay no more concerning Preaching, but proceed to the next way of publick teaching, which is;

Secondly, By Catechiſing, or inſtructing perſons in the Principles of Religion: Which is indeed but a more familiar way of Preaching. This is a Duty laid upon you by the Canon and Statute-Law both. The *Fifty Ninth* Canon under a ſevere Penalty, requires *every Rector, Vicar and Curate, upon every Lord's Day in the Afternoon, to examine, and inſtruct the Youth, and the more ignorant People of his Pariſh in the Catechiſm.* The ſame is made your Duty by Act of Parliament, in the firſt Rubrick after the Catechiſm; and becauſe ſome (who are apt enough to cenſure their Brethren for breaking other Laws) can too eaſily diſpenſe with themſelves in this, His Majeſty hath charged the Biſhops to ſee, *That all the Clergy* Let. to the Biſh. of *Lond.*

in their reſpective Dioceſſes do Catechiſe the Youth. To which, if we add the Practice of the Apoſtles, (the great Maſter-Builders of the Church) who firſt taught Men the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt: And laſtly, the voluntary Engagement you lye under to it, methinks nothing can be thought wanting to oblige you effectually to this Duty.

But now ſhould we ſet aſide all theſe Conſiderations, and conſider only, how advantagious this Work is to the Welfare of the Souls committed to our care; the great Benefits they would reap by it, the great Miſchiefs they fall into by the Neglect of it, one would think we ſhould need no other Motive to put us upon the diligent practice of it.

What is the Reaſon that our Sermons are generally of ſo little effect? That our People hear us year after year, and many of them are never the wiſer, *are ever learning, and never come to the Knowledge of the Truth?* One main Reaſon doubtleſs, is, becauſe they were never prepared to underſtand our Sermons, and to profit by them, by being firſt more familiarly inſtructed in the Principles of Religion. What's the Reaſon, That many are ſo eaſily ſeduced to Error and Vice, but becauſe they were never well rooted and grounded in the Faith? *Train up a Child*
Prov. 22. 6. *in the way that he ſhould go, and he will not depart from it when he is old.*

As therefore, my Brethren, you tender the Salvation of your People, ſet your ſelves without delay, to this ſo advantagious and neceſſary a Work: And that you may do it the more effectually, I give it you in Charge, to preach conſtantly in the Afternoon, upon ſome part of the Church Catechiſm; and to Examine ſome of the Young People of your Pariſh quite thorow it, as oft as you preach upon it. And that Parents and Maſters may take the greater care to ſend their Children and Servants, to be inſtructed by you, do not only frequently and earneſtly

neſtly exhort them to it, but thorowly acquaint them with the great Benefits that will accrue, not only to their Children and Servants, but likewiſe to themſelves thereby; as their Children will by this means be render'd more dutiful and obedient, and their Servants more faithful and diligent.

Having ſolemnly declared, That *You are perſwaded, that the Holy Scriptures contain ſufficiently all Doctrine required of neceſſity to eternal Salvation*; and that you *were determin'd out of the ſaid Scriptures, to inſtruct the People committed to your Charge*: In the next place you promiſed, *To give your faithful diligence always ſo to miniſter the Doctrine, Sacraments and Diſcipline of Chriſt, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the ſame, according to the commandment of God*; that is, as God hath preſcribed in the Holy Scriptures.

Of *Miniſtring the Doctrine of Chriſt*, I have already ſpoken, in what I have ſaid about Preaching and Catechiſing.

As to the Sacrament of Baptiſm, I ſhall at preſent only put you in mind of ſome few things, which are either expreſly or implicitly required by the Rubricks.

Firſt, Let your People know, That Baptiſm being the ſolemn Admiſſion of a Perſon into the publick Society of Chriſtians, it is very unbecoming its Nature and Deſign, to have it adminiſter'd in private. Admoniſh them therefore to bring their Children to be baptiz'd in the publick Congregation, leſt by their refuſing ſo to do, Chriſt ſhould reckon them in the number of thoſe, who are aſhamed of him and his Religion before men. Rubrick before private Baptiſm.

Secondly, Admoniſh your People, That it is moſt convenient, that Baptiſm ſhould not be adminiſter'd, but upon Sundays and Holy-days, when the greateſt number of People come together; becauſe in the Baptiſm of Infants, Rubr. before publick Baptiſm.

every Man preſent, may be put in remembrance of his own Profeſſion, made to God in his Baptiſm. Exhort them therefore diligently to attend throughout the whole Adminiſtration, to reflect upon their paſt lives, and to conſider how far they have kept, and wherein they have broken their Baptiſmal Vow.

Rubr. before private Baptiſm. *Thirdly*, Admoniſh your People, not to defer the Baptiſm of their Children longer than the firſt or ſecond Sunday next after their Birth, leſt by unneceſſary delay the Child die, before it be dedicated to the Service of the Lord Jeſus.

Fourthly, I add, (as being nearly allied to Baptiſm) That you take due care to prepare the young People of your Can. 61. Pariſhes for Confirmation: *So ſoon as Children are come* Rubr after the Catechiſm *to a competent Age, and can ſay in their Mother Tongue, the* Creed, *the* Lord's Prayer, *and the* Ten Commandments, *and can anſwer to the other Queſtions in the ſhort* Catechiſm, *they are to be brought to the Biſhop to be confirm'd:* But they are not to be thought to be of a competent age, (tho' they can repeat the Words) till they be capable of knowing the meaning of them, and their own great Concernment therein. For what profit can they receive by Confirmation, unleſs they underſtand what the deſign of it is, and the Obligation they take upon themſelves thereby? And this, my Brethren, is to be your care. You Rubr. after the Catechiſm are required either to bring or ſend in writing, with your hand ſubſcribed thereunto, the Names of all ſuch Perſons within your Pariſhes, as you ſhall think fit to be preſented to the Biſhop to be confirmed: And how can you think them fit, before you have examined them, and find that they have a competent knowledge of theſe things, and are willing to conſent to the Vow that was made in their Names, and to take it upon themſelves?

As to the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, (the too general

neral neglect of which, is juſt matter of lamentation) make your People know that they are not left at liberty, whether they will receive it or not; but that it is a neceſſary Duty laid upon them, by the expreſs command of Chriſt: That if they ſincerely love Chriſt, or have any Value for Chriſt's Love to them, they will need no other motive to induce them to it; That it is their Duty to receive it, not only ſometime or other before they die, (perhaps at their laſt breath) but frequently while they live, if they have opportunity: That the firſt Chriſtians made it a conſtant part of their publick Worſhip. And I beſeech you to adminiſter it in your Churches, as often as you can get a convenient number together to receive it; to be ſure, ſo often that every perſon may have opportunity of receiving it at leaſt three times in the Year.

As to *Diſcipline*, obſerve more eſpecially the Rubrick before the Communion, in keeping back thoſe Offenders from the Lords Table, whom you are there required not to admit, (viz. *Notorious evil Livers, or ſuch as have done any wrong to their Neighbours, by which the Congregation is offended*) and in giving an Account of them to the Ordinary.

And here, my Brethren, I deſire you ſeriouſly to conſider, That in this, and in your Anſwer to the next Queſtion, You promiſed *faithful diligence*, in doing the Duties of your Office; ſo many and ſo weighty indeed are they, that the utmoſt diligence imaginable, is little enough for the due performance of them; our Comfort is, all that God requires is *faithful diligence*. If we do not chuſe to neglect any Duty, or to do it careleſly; but ſincerely endeavour to perform them all as we ought, in what we fall ſhort, God will be merciful to us, and graciouſly accept the Will for the Deed. And this is the leaſt that God will accept; be not therefore ſlothful in this great buſineſs, but apply your ſelves conſtantly to your Work, and *whatſoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*

might. I might tell you, that the nature and deſign of our Work requires this; That the Names by which we are in Scripture ſignified, (as Stewards, Miniſters, Shepherds, Watchmen, Labourers,) do all import diligence and induſtry; that the Work is of all others, the moſt excellent, worthy of all the pains we can lay out upon it; I might ſet before you the example of our bleſſed Saviour, and his Apoſtles, of all thoſe faithful Paſtors who have gone before us: But I ſhall only add for your encouragement, That your Recompence from God, will be proportionable to your labour; by how much the more abundant you are in this work of the Lord, by ſo much the more abundant will your Reward in Heaven be.

But to proceed.

In the next place you promiſed theſe Two Things in the general.

I. *That you would be ready with all faithful diligence to baniſh and drive away all erroneous and ſtrange Doctrines contrary to God's Word.*

II. *To uſe both publick and private Monitions and Exhortations, as well to the Sick as to the Whole within your Cures, as need ſhall require, and occaſion ſhall be given.*

Firſt, That *You would be ready with all faithful diligence, to baniſh and drive away all erroneous and ſtrange Doctrines contrary to God's Word.* Concerning which Obſerve;

1. That the *Erroneous Doctrines* here meant, are thoſe only, which your People (ſome of them at leaſt) are already infected with; for no Errors can be baniſhed from them, but thoſe which they have given entertainment to.

As

As for other Errors, which they know nothing of, never ſo much as mention them, leſt by acquainting your People therewith, you may endanger their being inſnared by them. Obſerve,

2. That though all Erroneous Doctrines, are with *faithful diligence*, yet not all with *equal diligence* to be oppoſed; but as the Errors are more or leſs miſchievous, ſo our Zeal againſt them ought in proportion to be more or leſs. Some Errors there are which do not touch any part of the Foundation, which have no viſible tendency to an evil Life, or to the diſturbance of the Peace of the Church: Others there are which oppoſe ſome Articles of our Creed, as that Chriſt is not the Eternal Son of God, begotten of the Father before all Worlds, *&c.* and which are inconſiſtent with Peace and Holineſs. The former ſort do not deſerve to be oppoſed with ſo much Zeal as the later, againſt which we can never too earneſtly contend: Of which for inſtance, are theſe; That no Man is bound to repent of his Sins till he come to die; That Chriſt's Righteouſneſs is ſo made ours, that we need do nothing our ſelves in order to the obtaining of Eternal Salvation, *&c.*

Secondly, The next thing you promiſed, was, *To uſe both publick and private Monitions and Exhortations, as well to the Sick as to the Whole within your Cures, as need ſhall require, and occaſion ſhall be given.*

Firſt, *To the whole*; To uſe not only *publick* but *private Monitions and Exhortations, as need ſhall require.* And truly, my Brethren, there is commonly but too great need of this: For the Reproofs and Exhortations we uſe in publick, being not directed to this or that Perſon in particular, but to all in common, who are guilty of the Sin reproved, or of the Neglect of the Duty exhorted to: They who are concerned, do commonly find ſome way to ſhift them off from themſelves; but when you addreſs to each Sinner in particular, and plainly tell him, that

that *he is the Man*, who lives in the practice of this or that known Sin, &c. he can then find no way to make his Escape.

And here, my Brethren, I beseech you, not to be strangers to your People; but as you have leisure and opportunity, to go to their Houses, and acquaint your selves familiarly with them, that you may the better know, what their particular Tempers and Inclinations are, what are the Prejudices they lie under, what the Temptations they are most obnoxious to, and may accordingly apply your selves to them. By one hours familiar Discourse with them in private, you may work more good upon them, than by many Sermons in publick. Publick Preaching has, I grant, this great Advantage, that therein you speak to many, and by consequence may do good to many at once; but an Application to a Sinner in private, is usually much more effectual, as to him in particular.

To satisfie you, that this is your Duty, I need not tell you, that St. *Paul* taught not only publickly, but *from house to house*: That Night and Day he ceased not (as he had opportunity) to warn *every Man*; not all collectively, but every one apart, as the Words in the original import; That he exhorted and comforted, and charged *every one*. It will be enough to tell you, That to *rebuke a sinning Brother*, and to *exhort one another*, are the bounden Duties even of private Christians, and therefore much more of those, who by their Office are to watch over Souls, and to give an Account to God for them: But suppose this were not made your Duty antecedently by God, yet you have made it so Your selves, by your voluntary Promise to perform it.

Act. 20. 20, 31. ἕνα ἕκαστον.

1 Thes. 2. 11.

But that this weighty Work of private Instruction, Exhortation, Admonition and Reproof, may be the more successfully managed, take the most convenient seasons for it, when the Persons are the most apt to be wrought upon; and do it with that meekness and demonstration of love, that

that it may plainly appear to your People, that you do it out of meer Kindneſs and tender Compaſſion to their Souls.

Secondly, The next thing you Vowed, was, *Faithful diligence in your Monitions and Exhortations to ſick Perſons:* Which is a Work of the greateſt moment, in order to the engaging them to a HOLY Life, if they recover; or the preparing them for a Happy Death, if they be taken away by their ſickneſs; and therefore requires a proportionable care in the management of it. To ſee a ſoul entring upon the other World, likely within a few hours to be in an endleſs ſtate of happineſs or miſery inexpreſſible, ſhould, methinks, make us beſtir our ſelves, to ſave it from Death, before it be too late.

Do not therefore ſtay till you be ſent for, but go to them of your own accord. Deal faithfully, and withal prudently with them about the ſtate of their ſouls. If you find them groſly ignorant, inſtruct them (as you have opportunity) in thoſe Truths which are abſolutely neceſſary to be known. If they be ſuch as have lived in any notorious ſin, or whom you have great Reaſon to fear are meer ſtrangers to a Holy Life, labour to awaken them, by the moſt moving Conſiderations, to a ſenſe of their ſin and danger; but let them withal know, that their Caſe is not ſo deſperate, but that there is ſtill ground of hope concerning them: Shew them the greatneſs of that Salvation which Chriſt hath purchaſed for them, and upon what Terms it may be ſtill obtained by them. And though in their ſickneſs they cannot give Proof of the ſincerity of their Repentance, by reſiſting and overcoming thoſe Temptations which formerly prevailed over them; yet put them upon all that which in their preſent circumſtances they are capable of doing; upon confeſſing their ſins, and imploring the mercy of God thro' Chriſt; upon patient ſubmiſſion to God's good pleaſure; upon forgiving thoſe from the heart who have offended them;

and upon making Reſtitution (as far as they are able) for any Injuries they may have done to others; upon Reſolutions and ſolemn Promiſes, by the aſſiſtance of God's Grace, of forſaking their former ſins, and of leading a new Life, if God ſhall pleaſe to raiſe them up again. And if they recover, go to them again, and ſeriouſly mind them of the Vows they made upon their ſick beds, and quicken them to the performance of them. Do not fail to let them know, that their condition will be much more deplorable, if they ſhall again relapſe into their old ſins.

In the next place, theſe Queſtions were propos'd to you, *Will you be diligent in Prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in ſuch ſtudies as help to the Knowledge of the ſame, laying aſide the ſtudy of the World and the Fleſh?* To which you Anſwered: *I will endeavour my ſelf ſo to do, the Lord being my Helper.* So that you promiſed by God's Help theſe Four Things:

I. That you would be diligent in Prayers.
II. That you would be diligent, in reading the Holy Scriptures.
III. In ſuch ſtudies as would help to the Knowledge of the ſame. And therefore,
IV. That you would lay aſide the ſtudy of the World and the Fleſh.

Firſt, *That you would be diligent in Prayers.* That is, both in publick and private Prayers.

1. *In publick Prayers.* Which we ought more eſpecially to attend to, ſince GOD is much more honoured by our publick Addreſſes to him, than he can be by thoſe which are made to him in private; and becauſe we our ſelves may expect a greater Bleſſing from thoſe Prayers which are put up to God by many joyntly, than from thoſe which are put up by our ſingle ſelves. As there-

therefore anciently a Morning and Evening Sacrifice was every day publickly offer'd up to God in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*; ſo I heartily recommend it to you, my Brethren, That in all your Pariſhes, where a Congregation (though but a ſmall one) can be got together, you would every day have Morning and Evening Prayer in your Churches. And that you read the Prayers not *partially*, but *entirely*; and with ſuch ſeriouſneſs as becomes them, as may invite all piouſly-diſpoſed People to them, and quicken their Devotion when they are at them. I know not how any Miniſter can diſpenſe with himſelf in this matter, or what *Salvo* he can have for his Conſcience, who does otherwiſe. But though publick Prayers be the more excellent; yet,

2. This cannot excuſe you from being *diligent in private Prayers*; and that both for your People, and for your ſelves.

Firſt, Pray much and earneſtly for your People: Of this St. *Paul* hath ſet us an Example, as he himſelf teſtifies in his Epiſtles; thus he prayed for the *Coloſſians*, *That they might be filled with the Knowledge of the will of God, in all Wiſdom and ſpiritual Underſtanding, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work.* Thus he pray'd for the *Epheſians*, *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, would give unto them, the ſpirit of Wiſdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of their underſtanding being enlightened; that they might know what is the hope of his Calling*, &c. That *God would grant them according to the riches of his Glory, to be ſtrengthen'd with all might, by his ſpirit in the inner Man; that Chriſt might dwell in their hearts by Faith*, &c. Thus he tells the *Romans*, *That without ceaſing he made mention of them always in his Prayers.* In like manner he prayed for the *Philippians*; *Always* (ſays he) *and in every Prayer of mine for you all, making requeſt with joy.* He thought it not enough to pray once or twice,

Coloſ. 1. 9, 10, 11.

Epheſ. 1. 15, 16, 17, 18.

Epheſ. 3. 16, 17, 18, 19.

Rom. 1. 9.

Phil. 1. 4.

but he ceaſed not ſtill to pray for them. It cannot be thought, that any Paſtor, who aims, as he ought, at the ſalvation of his People, can forbear to pray for them.

Secondly, Pray conſtantly and earneſtly for your ſelves. For ſuch aſſiſtances of God's holy ſpirit, as may inable you rightly to diſcharge the Duties of your holy Calling. *We*
2 Cor. 3. 5. *are not ſufficient of our ſelves, to think any thing as of our ſelves, but all our ſufficiency is of God.* We made our Ordination Vow in expectation of, and dependance upon Gods help. *I will do ſo by the help of the Lord; I will, the Lord being my helper.* And we need not doubt of God's help, if we ſincerely and importunately pray for it; for
Luk. 11. 13. he hath promiſed *his Holy Spirit to them that ask it*; That is, all the Gifts of his Holy Spirit, we ſtand in need of. But to proceed:

2. You promiſed, *To be diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures.* And,
3. *In ſuch ſtudies as help to the knowledge of the ſame.*

I put them both together for brevities ſake.

1 Tim. 4. 13. St. *Paul* commanded *Timothy, to give attendance to reading, viz.* of the Holy Scriptures; and that not only in publick to others, but alſo in private; that he himſelf might be the more thoroughly inſtructed in them. And if this was needful for *Timothy*, who had learn'd the Holy Scriptures from a Child, it will I fear, be much more needful for many of us. The Scriptures were inſpired by God to this very end, That the *man of God* (that is the
2 Tim. 3. 17. Miniſter of the Goſpel) *might be throughly furniſhed to all good works.* That he might be inſtructed in every part of the Duty which belongs to his Office; whether it be to teach, or to reprove, or to correct, or to inſtruct in righteouſneſs. Out of this ſacred repoſitory, and this only, we may be ſupplyed with whatſoever is neceſſary for us and our People, to know, and to believe, and to do.

I therefore earneſtly preſs you to the ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures day and night; to get ſuch parts of them by heart, as may be of moſt frequent and neceſſary uſe, that you may have them in readineſs upon all occaſions. And in your reading of them, to obſerve thoſe places which are moſt obſcure, to compare them with the Originals, and with the words coherent; to conſult ſome one or more of the beſt Commentators upon them, that you may attain to the true ſenſe of them. And for thoſe who have leiſure and ability for it to read the Fathers, at leaſt, of the three firſt Centuries; the Hiſtory and Antiquities of the Church; the *Babylonian*, *Perſian*, *Greek*, *Roman* and *Jewiſh* Antiquities; and ſuch other parts of Learning, without which many places of Scripture cannot be well underſtood. And that you may be thus diligent in Prayer, and in reading and ſtudying the Holy Scriptures.

Fourthly, You promiſed *To lay aſide the ſtudy of the World and the Fleſh.* For the more you ſtudy the World, the leſs will you ſtudy the Holy Scriptures; the more you conſult the eaſe and pleaſure of the Fleſh, the leſs will you attend to the pleaſing of God, and the ſaving of Souls. In what degree ſoever your affections are ſet upon the things on the Earth, in that they will neceſſarily be taken off from the things above. O remember, That every Clergy-man is a *man of God*, dedicated to him in a more eminent ſervice than others are; and that you rob God of all that time and ſtudy, which are needleſſy ſpent upon other matters. Remember, that you are obliged, not only by your Baptiſmal Vow, to renounce the World and the Fleſh, as Lay Chriſtians alſo are; but more cloſely bound to it than they, by this ſolemn Vow you made at your Ordination. Let it appear to all Men, that you pay your Vows by your living above this World, and having your Converſation in Heaven.

In the next place you promiſed theſe two things:

This part of the Ordination-Vow was made the Subject of the whole Charge at another place; and therefore is here the more briefly ſpoken to.

I. *That You would be diligent to frame and faſhion your own ſelves and your Families, according to the Doctrine of Chriſt.* And which is ſomewhat more,

II. *To make both your ſelves and them, as much as in you lyeth, wholeſome Examples and Patterns to the Flock of Chriſt.*

Firſt, You promiſed to be diligent, *To frame your own ſelves according to the Doctrine of Chriſt*; to have your Converſation in all things ſuitable to the Goſpel you preach. He can never be ſeriouſly concerned for other mens ſouls, who has not firſt a care of his own; nor make it his chief ſtudy to conduct others in *the narrow way that leads to Life*, who walks himſelf in *the broad way that leads to deſtruction*. But ſuppoſe he could ſincerely endeavour to deſtroy that ſin in others which he cheriſhes in himſelf; yet what ſucceſs can he in reaſon expect? Can it be thought that his People ſhould pay any regard to what he ſays, when they ſee that he does not regard it himſelf? Can they think, that he does in good earneſt believe what he preaches, when he unpreaches the ſame again in his life? And is it then likely, that they ſhould believe it, eſpecially when it thwarts their beloved Luſts?

But if there ſhould be any among us, whom this Conſideration does not affect; yet methinks it ſhould awaken them to conſider, That a vicious Preacher, is in a much more miſerable and deplorable Condition, than a vicious Hearer; becauſe his ſins are much more aggravated, and conſequently, his Puniſhment will be proportionably more intollerable. Thou that teacheſt another Man ſhould not be drunk, if thou art a Drunkard; Thou that preacheſt another ſhould not be covetous, or proud, or contentious, if thou art ſo thy ſelf, thy own Sermons will riſe up in Judgment againſt thee; out of thy own Mouth ſhalt thou be

be condemned to that utter darkneſs thou haſt warned others to make their eſcape from; and ſhalt have the darkeſt and moſt diſmal Portion in it. But this is not all: For,

2. That meaſure of Grace and Holineſs which may ſuffice for a Lay-man, will not be enough for thoſe who are to be their Guides. You cannot go to Heaven at ſo cheap a rate, as your People can; as your Calling is more holy, and ſtands in a nearer Relation to God, ſo alſo muſt your Lives be. You muſt be Patterns of all thoſe Graces and Vertues you recommend to them; that they by looking upon you, may be able to diſcern wherein they are defective. *In all things ſhewing thy ſelf a Pattern of good Works*, ſays St. *Paul* to *Titus*; which he alſo gives in charge to *Timothy*, *Be thou an Example to the Believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.* Which Commands, though given to thoſe who were of the higher, yet are in proportion applicable to thoſe of the lower Order of the Clergy: For as Biſhops ought to be Examples to the inferiour Clergy, ſo the inferiour Clergy ought to be Examples to the Laity. Tit. 2. 7. 1 Tim. 4. 12.

It is indeed the Duty of all, even the moſt vulgar Chriſtians, if compared with the men of the World, to be Patterns to them; ſo our Saviour tells his Diſciples, That they were to be *the ſalt of the Earth*, and *the light of the world*; and commands them to *let their light ſo ſhine before men, that others ſeeing their good works, might glorifie their Father which is in Heaven.* What then is required of you, my Brethren, who ought to be Examples to them, who are to be Examples to the reſt of Mankind? *what manner of Perſons ought you to be, in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs?* Mat. 5. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Nor muſt we only endeavour to frame our ſelves, but our *Families* too, according to the Doctrine of Chriſt; and to make them Examples to other Families; to make our Children and Servants, as much as in us lyeth, Examples to thoſe of others, in all thoſe Graces and Duties, which

which are proper to thoſe Relations: Which muſt be done by more fully inſtructing them in their reſpective Duties, and by frequently preſſing their Duties upon them by ſuch Conſiderations, as may be of power to over-awe their Conſciences, and oblige them to the performance thereof; and by hearty Prayers to God, to make our endeavours this way ſucceſsful.

There is one thing more in your Ordination-Vow, which I ſhall but very briefly recommend to your Conſideration and Practice; and that is, *That you will maintain and ſet forward as much as lieth in you, quietneſs, peace, and love among all Chriſtian-People; eſpecially among them who are, or ſhall be committed to your Charge.*

As to make peace, not only between God and Man, but alſo between man and man, was one great thing our bleſſed Saviour had in his eye, when he came into the World; ſo, in order thereunto, he hath enjoyned the Practice of all thoſe Vertues, which tend to the begetting and promoting of Peace, and hath forbidden all thoſe ill-natur'd qualities, that are Enemies to it. As he hath commanded, *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men:* So he hath preſſed us with great variety of the moſt powerful Arguments, *to be at peace among our ſelves.* So much was Peace his Deſign, that he is ſtiled the PRINCE of Peace, and his Goſpel is called, the Goſpel of Peace. As therefore we are the Ambaſſadors of this Prince of Peace, and intruſted with the diſpenſation of his Goſpel of Peace, we are above all other men in the World, obliged, to the utmoſt of our power, to prevent or reconcile differences; and to maintain and promote Peace among our People.

Rom. 12. 18.

Eph. 4. 1, 2, 3.
Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3.

To that end, go to them that you hear are at variance, endeavour to remove their Prejudices, to correct their Miſtakes, to allay their Paſſions, to perſwade them to mutual Condeſcention; and by all other fair means to make them heartily Friends: Ever remembring, That, *Bleſſed*

are

are the Peace-makers for they ſhall be called the Children of God. Mat. 5. 9.

To the laſt part of your Ordination-Vow, (*viz. That you will reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Miniſters, to whom is committed the Charge and Government over you,* &c.) I ſhall ſay nothing, but leave it to your own Conſciences to comment upon it, preſuming you will be impartial therein, and leſs favourable to your ſelves than I ſhould be.

There is one thing ſtill behind, that I muſt give you in Charge, and that is, The ſtrict obſervation of the Canon againſt clandeſtine Marriages. I hope thoſe who practice contrary to it, are in compariſon but few, (notwithſtanding the many Complaints which have been made to me about it) That they are no other than the idle, looſe and vagrant; that is, the Scum and Refuſe of the Clergy, who drive on this ſcandalous Trade: For I cannot perſwade my ſelf, That any Man who has not very much debauch'd his Conſcience, and loſt all ſenſe of Honour and Reputation, can be eaſily prevailed with to make ſuch Marriages, conſidering how expreſs and ſevere the Laws of our Church are againſt them; and conſidering the many ſins and miſchiefs which are the uſual Conſequents of them. Can. 62.

I ſhall paſs over thoſe which are of a more general extent, and only mention a few of thoſe Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions, which more particularly relate to our own Church.

In a Council conven'd at *Weſtminſter* in the Year 1175, it was Ordain'd, That if any Prieſt ſhall be found to have joyned any in Marriage clandeſtinely, he ſhall be ſuſpended from his Office for the ſpace of Three Years.

In a Council held after this, in the Church of St. *Pauls* in *London* in the Year 1328, it was decreed, That all Prieſts who ſhall preſume to be preſent at any Matrimonial Contracts, before the ſolemn publication of Banns, Lynw. l. 4. Tit. 3. c. 1.

ſhall be ſuſpended from their Office for three Years. And that every Prieſt, whether Secular or Regular, who ſhall without the ſpecial leave of the Dioceſan, preſume to Celebrate Marriage in any place but a Church or Chappel, which hath Parochial Rights, ſhall be ſuſpended a whole Year *ab Officio*.

Lynw. l. 4. Tit. 3. c. 2. In another Council held at St. *Pauls London*, in the Year 1342, it was decreed, That all Prieſts who ſhall preſume to be preſent at any clandeſtine Marriages, ſhall *ipſo facto* incur the Sentence of Excommunication; and ſhall be publickly denounced four times every year. Which Decrees are ſtill in force, by the Statute of the 25*th*. of *Hen*. 8. *C*. 19.

But we need not look ſo far back; one would think, it might be ſufficient, to conſider the 62*d*. Canon, made in the Convocation in the year 1603. In which every Miniſter upon pain of Suſpenſion for three years *ipſo facto*, is prohibited to Celebrate Matrimony between any Perſons without a Licenſe, except the Banns of Matrimony have been firſt publiſh'd three ſeveral Sundays or Holy-days, in the Pariſh Churches or Chappels, where the ſaid Parties dwell. And is alſo upon the like Penalty prohibited, under any pretence whatſoever, to joyn any Perſons ſo licenſed, in Marriage, at any time but between the hours of 8 and 12 in the Morning; or in any place, but in the ſaid Churches or Chappels where one of them dwelleth. It is not enough barely to have a Licence, if the Circumſtances of *Time* and *Place* be not duly obſerved, you incur the Penalty of three years Suſpenſion.

And as our Church hath ſet ſuch a ſtrict Fence about Marriages, ſo there was great Reaſon ſhe ſhould be ſo ſevere in puniſhing thoſe that break thorough it; conſidering thoſe enormous Sins, and thoſe intolerable Miſchiefs, which are the uſual Attendants and Conſequents of Clandeſtine Marriages.

One too common effect of ſuch Marriages, is the Sin of

of Inceſt, in joyning thoſe Perſons in Matrimony who are within the Degrees prohibited. In one of thoſe Eccleſiaſtical Laws, I have now recited, this is mention'd as the Reaſon of it. A Proof of which (as I am inform'd) you have lately had, in Two Inceſtuous Clandeſtine Marriages made in this Dioceſs.

Another Sin uſually attendant on theſe Marriages, is the violating the Rights of Parents, and contempt of their Authority. Nor do they only deprive Parents of the Duty of their Children, but in effect of their Children themſelves; which is one of the worſt ſort of Theſts, and deſerves a much more ſevere Puniſhment, than many other Theſts, which are by our Laws puniſhed with Death.

The Diſhonour they reflect upon our Church, and our Holy Profeſſion, is intollerable; ſo much hath the Reputation of the Clergy been thereby leſſen'd, that it hath been moved more than once, in the great Council of the Nation, that this Work might be taken out of their hands, and intruſted to others, who might be more faithful in the Execution of it.

How miſchievous theſe Marriages commonly prove to the Parties ſo Married, and to their Children after them, how fatal they often are to conſiderable Families, even to the ruine of them; and conſequently, What Miſchiefs do hence redound to the Publick, I need not tell you. I forbear to proceed to other particulars, becauſe theſe already mention'd, will, I hope, be ſufficient, to deter every man from this ſcandalous Practice, who hath not ſinn'd away all Conſcience and Shame.

What remains, but that I charge the Church wardens under Pain of Perjury, to preſent all thoſe Miniſters, whom they either know, or have been credibly inform'd have been this way guilty. And if the Church-wardens ſhall neglect their Duty, I beſeech you, my Brethren, to take care, that they may be ſome way or other preſented; that

that I may take care to see them punished according to Law. And if any Ministers shall after this Admonition given them, proceed to make such Marriages, as thinking their Danger will be past, as soon as the Visitation shall be over, I shall not fail, upon Information given me, to execute the Canon in its rigour against them.

To Conclude.

Let us now, my Brethren, seriously reflect upon what hath been spoken. Let us consider the Trust committed to us, the Vows that are upon us, the Account we must shortly give to the Almighty, All-seeing and Impartial Judge; the dreadful Woe we shall incur, if we be false to our Trust; the Glorious Reward we shall have, if we be faithful. For your Peoples sake, if you desire to save them: For your own sakes, if you desire to save your selves, and would not be condemned to a more intollerable Hell, than the worst of your People shall be condemned to: For God's sake, if you have any regard to his Commands; For Jesus's sake, if you have any Love for him, *Feed his Flock which he hath purchased with his own Blood*; feed them, *not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready mind. Be instant in season, and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and patience. Make full proof of your Ministry; That so when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive a Crown of Glory, which shall not away.*

FINIS.